



Virginia African American Advisory Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 26, 2022 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Virginia State University – Foster Hall
1 Hayden Drive
Petersburg, VA 23806

Minutes

Attendance:

Members Present:

Dr. Ivey Green, Cozy Bailey, Robert Barnette, Jr., Eldon Burton, Keren Charles Dongo, Hope F. Cupit, Sheila Dixon, Toria Edmonds-Howell, Ingrid Granberry-Grant, Gaylene Kanoytan, Eduardo Lopez, Precious Muhammad, Van Wilson, and Tia Yancey.

Virginia Commonwealth Staff present:

Ms. Suzanne Holland

Members Absent:

Larry Boone, Shirley Ginwright, Cameron Patterson, Monica Reid, Tamara Walkerson-Dias, and Chris Sanchez

Guest:

Dr. Rosa Atkins, Michael Perez, and Nicolas Pollard, a VSU student

Welcome, Introductions and Announcements

Eldon Burton gave a welcome and greeting to the campus. He informed the group that the President and others from the University would greet the Board.

Dr. Rosa Atkins, Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion Officer, spoke to the Board.

Her assistant, Michael Perez, introduced himself.

Makola Abdullah, the President of VA State University, welcomed the group and spoke about the University's initiatives. He provided information about the challenges and opportunities the University is facing.

Dr. Patrice Perry-Rivers, Associate Professor of Management and founding Director of the VSU Center for Entrepreneurship, gave an overview of The Center and Minority Small Business Launch Center <<http://www.minoritysmallbusinesslaunchcenter.com/>> program. She informed the Board that both are housed in the AACSB-accredited Reginald F. Lewis College of Business at VSU <<http://business.vsu.edu/>> .

Because of its rigorous standards for educational programs, well-trained and quality faculty, academic research, and societal impact, she also stated that AACSB <<https://www.aacsb.edu/learners/tools/why-accreditation-matters>> is considered the gold standard in accreditation for business schools in the world. VSU is proud to hold the same business school accreditation as University of Va. and Harvard. Only 18 colleges or university business schools in Virginia out of the 50+ in the state have this accreditation. She provided the following link for more information: <https://www.aacsb.edu/learners/tools/why-accreditation-matters>. Mrs. Dongo spoke with Dr. Perry-Rivers about the importance of supporting small black owned business.

November 2021 Meeting Minutes

The reading and approval of the November 2021 minutes were tabled until the next meeting of the VA-AAA board of directors. The meeting is to be held on June 23, 2022.

April Meeting Agenda Adoption

The Board unanimously adopted the April 2022 meeting agenda.

Board Administration Update

Ms. Holland gave a board administrative update; she will share that update via email. CJ Taylor, from Governor Youngkin's office, is planning engagements and he wants to hear about what the Board is doing in terms of regional and local events.

Chair's Report

Dr. Ivey Green acknowledged Mrs. Yvonne Lewis for her life and legacy. She asked the Board to have a moment of silence in her memory. Dr. Green continued to provide more memories of the great work that Mrs. Lewis leaves behind.

She spoke on the annual report. She wants the board to note that the issues being addressed in the past three years, still need solutions. She thanked Governor Youngkin's staff for being present at the meeting. The Black Table Talk was postponed on small black owned business due to a panel member pulling out.

She wanted to acknowledge that the committees will meet and will have discussions later today to deliberate the continued focus areas to update and/or change focus. Dr. Green asked Dr. Ruth Atkins to provide an update to the board. Dr. Atkins spoke about entrepreneurship and that this initiative is one of the Governor's goal to incorporate to a diverse audience. Dr. Atkins mentioned that partnering with Trade and Commerce Secretary is necessary to continue the effort of Entrepreneurship. Two other efforts are also being pursued, (1) work alongside the Dept of Education that history is taught in an honest way and (2) have diverse and inclusive free speech. Civil discourse has become very painful and we have to allow folks to be free to speak their opinions without fear of being canceled.

Dr. Green mentioned the importance of not wanting Equity to fall off the table in the diversity efforts and wants to invite Dr Atkins to speak more about DEI.

Dr Ingrid Grant spoke about keeping teachers in the system as we are losing them to other states and Industries. The main reason for the teachers leaving is to become a home owner. A teaching salary does not support building wealth for a family. Dr. Grant also spoke about Entrepreneurship and how to get credentials in industry and CPE. It is important to look into assisting students that don't want to nor can afford to go to college.

Another guest introduced themselves. He is a college student at VSU. The student's name is Nicolas Pollard, he is majoring in Mechanical Engineering.

Dr. Green spoke about us looking at strategic planning to continue the work of the board. She also mentioned that Rev. Cozy Bailey Sr is going to lead the charge on our annual report. He is going to speak to the committees on how to conduct the work they are doing.

Committee Breakouts

Dr. Bailey addressed the board on how we will conduct our meetings moving forward. He reminded the committee chairs to remember our focus. He wants each committee to address four major items that will be included in the report. The committees are as follows:

- Criminal Justice & Public Safety
- Education & Workforce
- Healthcare & the Environment
- Small Black-Owned Business

The committees met for a brief period to review the focus that is being sent to the Governor's office.

Dr. Bailey is having Ms. Holland speak about how to coordinate committee meetings with her office. It was noted that it was hard to move on 2022 report since no feedback has been provided for the 2021 report. He noted we don't want to repeat anything. He reminded the Board that we need explicit language in the report moving forward.

Committee Reports and Breakout Session

The committees met for a brief period to review the focus that is being sent to the Governor's office for consideration. The committees reported out to the members, each committee chair given five minutes to report out.

- Healthcare & the Environment
- Mrs. Kanoytan

Focus will be on

1. Obesity
 - a. COVID attacks people that are obese
 - b. Heart disease
2. Access to Quality health care
 - a. Rural and Urban areas
 - b. Early detection
 - c. Mental health
 - d. Maternal health
 - e. Transportation
 - f. Housing
3. Environment
 - a. Water and Air Quality
 - i. Air quality in homes
 - ii. Lead
 - b. Pollution

Discussion ensued and questions were asked of Mrs. Gaylene. Eldon Burton mentioned the Public Health Institute that could potentially be used as a resource for the work of the board. Mr. Burton will send out the information to the board. Gaylene mentioned the dashboard and mentioned that she hopes the dashboard returns.

Ingrid – Education & Workforce

1. Recruit African American educators
 - a. Workforce development
2. Focus on HBCU
2. Need educators that are culturally competent
Look at VSU model – You teach
3. Passing the practice test.
Provide support
4. Deep dive in mental health and behavioral support
 - a. Suspensions and working with unmarginalized groups

Approve network of support / stop competing with one another
Look at Trauma informed training
Spoke about differences between higher education vs prek-12

Discussion ensued. Green mentioned that there is a shortage of mental health care providers. Congo mentioned special education – struggling due to funding. Virtual learning also impacted special education services. Ingrid wanted to mention the committee did discuss special education

and another focus area. Green stated it is important for wrap up items in the summary so that these issues are in the report.

Lopez- Criminal Justice & Public Safety

Not sure if the work done last year will have an impact however the committee plans to continue to build on what was recently reported.

- Policing accountability and working with community
 - Build better relationships
 - Establishing community accountability boards
- Study on Gun violence
 - Need a comprehensive study
- Pretrial justice
 - Get rid of mandatory minimums
 - Council at first appearance
 - Pretrial detention (impacts cash bail)

The committees should work across one another to cross reference ideas and recommendations.

Discussion ensued...

Congo

Small Black-Owned Business

The committee discussed the following ideas.

- Outline the time discussing about Black Table Talks
- Rather have a panel discussion versus having a roundtable discussion
- Have 12 people around the table to discuss concerns.
- Have the chamber of commerce (especially the black chambers) involved.

The goal is to ensure the discussion is informative. The discussion will take place in person and virtually. The date to host is June 2 in Richmond.

Items the committee needs to do:

- Confirm new location
- Get a flyer
- Get list of chambers
- List of business to invite around the table

The committee wants to look at industries most impacted by COVID. Michael Perez will provide the list to the committee.

Burton suggested meeting locations such as VA union and the Black history museum. Bailey spoke to the inefficiency of the SWAM program. It has been very difficult for many small, black owned businesses in this space. He reminded the board that it is important to have the proper context setting for each topic in the report.

Setting up Committee Meetings

Bailey asked Ms. Holland to remind us of the process when meeting. She pointed us to the back of the Agenda to look at a tentative timeline to draft. She indicated that March-June is the timeframe to start. Should meet with experts and other resources to gather data for the report. She mentioned that the September deadline is a very important date to have the report into the governors' office. Report should be prepared before September.

To set up Committee meetings, an email is sent to all chairs to set up dates for meetings. She wants the chairs to be more proactive and not wait for her. The chairs can set it up via the public calendar. Has to be on public calendar for 3 days in advance before you meet. Have to have minutes. Can have virtual meetings via June 30 and then it goes away. After June 30 all committee meetings have to be in person. If you have a quorum in the committee or board meeting only then may someone join virtually. Justin Bell spoke to the meeting expectation and how to set it up. He indicated that best practice language relating to meetings will get presented in September 2022. Committee members may set up zoom and must send the zoom link to Ms. Holland. Ms. Holland will set up webex and share that link. All committee meetings must have an Agenda and minutes.

Strategic Planning

Ms. Holland discussed the approach for the strategic plan of the board for the period 2022-2025. She made a brief presentation to the board on how to conduct a productive strategic plan. Dr. Green spoke about the strategic plan and looking at 2023. She asked all board members to pull up Jamboard and provide input. Several Board members provided input. Ms. Sheila Dixon provided data about the number of black owned businesses located in Northern Virginia. Mr. Eldon Burton spoke about the decline of black farmers and the need to address the decline.

Ms. Holland mentioned Secretary James, Secretary of the Commonwealth, and for all members to develop a relationship with the Secretary.

Dr. Green encouraged the group to use the Jamboard tool. Ms. Holland recommended that the members use identifiers such as initials to keep documents organized by board member.

Public Comment

There was one public comment during this meeting. The speaker spoke about gun violence and the tip line for teachers. He wants the Governor to not allow a tip line against our teachers which may have some impact on teacher shortages. He states that such acts in the Commonwealth should not be allowed and have no place. He urges the board to meet with the Governor to provide solutions for his concerns especially for gun violence.

Closing remarks, announcements and adjournment

Green thanked everyone for the report out. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.